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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to identify and analyze some of the common linguistic patterns that impede the academic progress of black students entering college. A questionnaire, distributed to educators in communication skills on the college level, asked for the identification of common black linguistic features according to familiarity and use in each institution. All respondents recognized the distinct patterns of the black linguistic system, and the majority felt that it interferes with the student's academic progress. The study presents instructional programs used in several post-secondary institutions to assist students in developing Standard English communication skills. Appendixes include a list of participants in the study, the questionnaire on communication skills developed for this study, a list of Black English terms, and a detailed bibliography of Black English resource materials. (MAI)

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AFRO-AMERICAN LINGUISTIC PATTERNS: IMPACT ON ACADEMIC SUCCESS

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FOREWORD

During the past several years, professional journals, newspapers and other media have given much attention to college students' deficiencies in communication skills--listening, reading, writing and speaking. It has been generally accepted that because of insufficient communication skills in Standard English a significant number of college students do not reach their maximum potential in academic success. This condition has appeared to be particularly true among minority students.

This report addresses some selected Afro-American linguistic patterns (commonly referred to as Black English) which some academicians believe impede academic progress. It also provides descriptions of instructional programs in communication skills which are being used in regional postsecondary institutions to effectuate competence in Standard English usage.

It is hoped that this report will be informative and useful to institutions that are seeking to provide special instructional programs for those minority students who need special assistance in improving their communication habits in Standard English.

W. C. Brown, Director
Institute for Higher
Educational Opportunity
Southern Regional Education Board

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Special thanks are also extended to Dr. W. C. Brown, Director of the Institute for Higher Educational Opportunity of the Southern Regional Education Board and other Board staff for their assistance in completing this document.

Without the cooperation of all who assisted in this study, this publication would not have been possible.

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INTRODUCTION

It has been established that many Afro-American students enter postsecondary education with linguistic patterns that seem to impede academic achievement. This study of Southern regional institutions was designed to identify and analyze some of the more common of these linguistic patterns and to describe some institutional programs which are being used to address communication problems of black students.

A questionnaire (See Appendix B) was devised and distributed to educators currently involved in communication skills instruction on the college level. The questionnaire included some examples of common black linguistic features to be identified by the educators according to familiarity and use in the communication patterns of the black students who attended their respective institutions. The features in the questionnaire were taken from a study by a linguist in Washington, D.C.[1] In addition, questions were asked to identify procedures and programs which address specific communication needs of black students.

To elicit responses based on a common definition, Black English was used, a term which may not be unanimously accepted by all academicians. This term and another may need further description.

Black English[2]

> This term refers to the type of English spoken and/or understood by many Afro-Americans. It is usually spoken by lower socio-economic blacks. The more affluent and educated blacks become, the chances are fewer that they may use Black English.

Standard English[3]

This language system is acceptable and understood by the vast majority of our society, even those who may speak a non-standard variety of English. It is society's "universal" dialect. More importantly, it is the language of the classroom.

DISCUSSION OF THE DATA

Questionnaires were distributed to 111 selected institutions in the SREB region; 54 four-year and 23 two-year institutions responded. Forty-nine of the 77 respondents were identified as predominantly black institutions. Ten responses were received too late to be analyzed for inclusion in this study.

The investigation was directed to those individuals directly involved in the communications skills programs of their respective institutions. Forty-two of the respondents have Ph.D. or Ed.D. degrees; 22 hold the M.A. degree, and an additional 14 hold the Master's degree plus additional hours. Over 50 percent of those who participated in this study have taught at their respective institutions for six or more years. Tenure of the respondents ranged from one and one-half months to 30 years.

Percentages were rounded in computing the responses to the questionnaire items.

Sixty percent of the respondents believe that the linguistic system of blacks interferes with their ability to develop standard English communication skills. The reasons offered for this interference ranged from attitudinal to social factors. For example, not being able to get away from the dialect of one's socio-economic system was considered a social reason. Linguistically speaking, many respondents believe that "unlearning the grammar" is more difficult than "unlearning the vocabulary." Thirty-five percent of the respondents believe that Black English does not interfere with the student's

ability to develop Standard English communication skills. A third of the 35 percent went on to say that a person's indigenous linguistic system had nothing to do with the ability or inability to develop Standard English skills; instead, the linguistic system used becomes a matter of preference depending to a degree on social circumstances. Five percent did not respond to this item.

Eighty percent of the respondents recognize Black English as a structured system of language, but most of them qualified their positions, contending that, though it may be considered a structured form of language, it is probably still just a "dialect" and should be treated as one.

In spoken language, 75 percent of the respondents noticed the substitution of "f" for "th" ("toof" for "tooth"). The absence of the final member of consonant clusters ("dess" for "desks") was observed by 95 percent. The absence of the copulative (linking) verb ("he busy" for "he is busy") was noted by 80 percent, and 90 percent noticed the absence of the third person singular in verbs ("he act" for "he acts"). Finally, 75 percent of the respondents recognized the use of the "habitual be" ("he be" for "he is") in the speech of their students.

These high percentages indicate that the respondents are familiar with and are able to identify Black English features. This is a significant point because instructors must know the characteristics of Black English if they are to design programs which address this educational phenomenon.

In the written communication of their students, 65 percent identified the Black English features used in this study. Additional characteristics of their students' writing patterns were also noted:

omission of past tense marker (absence of "ed");

omission of possessive marker (absence of apostrophe "boy's hat");

omission of plural marker (absence of "s" or "es");

double subjects ("the boy he");

sentence fragments (incomplete sentences);

structures not parallel (inconsistent use of suffixes, such as "ing");

comma splices (misplaced commas);

lack of subject and verb agreement ("he give" for "he gives");

phonological confusion stemming from homophonous words ("alone" for "along", "doing" for "during").

Many of these characteristics present in the black student's written work are not necessarily related to the spoken linguistic system. They are, instead, general errors that may be found in the written composition of anyone who is learning to write Standard English composition. English instructors have observed that white students also have many of these same errors in their written compositions while developing written communication competency.

Forty-five percent of the respondents believed their students know their communication habits deviate from Standard English usage. When asked how black students who are unaware of this deviation are made aware, the following types of responses were given:

general classroom discussion and individual conferences;

extensive laboratory training;

drills;

discussions and tape recordings;

freshman English courses;

written handouts;

audio-visual programs;

exposure to correct forms;

opportunity to monitor the difference.

These types of methods, as delineated by the respondents, are being used by some institutions to familiarize their students with the standard communication norm.

Responses varied to the question: To what do you attribute the students' deficiencies in standard communication skills? Some respondents believe the "deficiency" to be a result of attitude. That is, the student resents everything that may be considered "establishment." One group of respondents felt that because society dictates a specific way of communication, black students who communicate differently are labeled as having a communication deficiency. Students are also deficient, a third group observed, because of inexperience with the more literate segments of society. Percentages were not computed on these responses because of the diversity in the manner in which they were reported.

All of the communication skills--listening, reading, writing and speech--would be stressed by 80 percent of the respondents when developing a program to improve students' communication skills. And, 80 percent would use all available methods (laboratory programmed exercises, written drills, spoken drills, etc.). No single method was listed as being preferable or more effective than the others.

Their institutions have recognized the necessity of developing a program

which focuses on improving the communication skills of black students, according to 60 percent of the respondents. Most noted that the freshman English course was being re-designed to handle this task.

Sixty percent of the responding institutions are working with the entire faculty to help encourage and develop more effective communication skills programs for all students. Over half of these respondents stated that all faculty members at their respective institutions were involved in the developmental process through workshops and seminars.

Additional information and comments other than those specifically asked on the questionnaire were offered by the respondents. These comments may be divided into two general categories:

1) The attitudes of institutions in particular and society in general; and

2) The tendency of the questionnaire to be biased and exclusive.

Concerning comments on the attitudes of educational institutions and society, a variety of responses were found. Generally, it was cited that our society is "elitist" and because of segregation a large segment of minorities has been relegated to an inferior quality of education. However, since many institutions outside the traditionally black ones seem to be experiencing problems with the communication skills of their students, it is being increasingly recognized that problems in communication are not restricted only to minority students. The concerns about these problems can be observed more and more through institutional efforts to develop better instructional techniques.

The second category addressed the biasness of the questionnaire because it was restricted to blacks. While it is admitted that some Southern white speech may be very similar to the linguistic patterns of blacks cited in the questionnaire, it is emphasized that this study was not to make a comparison of black and white linguistic patterns nor to examining every conceivable feature of the linguistic style of blacks. (See Appendix C for a more complete listing of black linguistic styles.) It was the express purpose of the study to focus on some selected communication patterns of black postsecondary students in the Southern region for use as a tool in developing teaching strategies.

The majority (80 percent) of the respondents recognize the existence of Black English as a structured linguistic system or a language, though they are reluctant to use the term Black English. Even though they recognize Black English as being legitimate, 60 percent believe that speaking Black English interferes with the development of Standard English skills.

The investigator believes, from analyzing the data, that there is a clear conceptualization of the problems that may confront the black student who has not acquired standard communication skills as well as the impact it has on the potential for academic success. Furthermore, from the general comments made by some of the respondents, many are aware of the importance society places upon acquisition of these skills. It is important also to realize that the students' attitudes toward themselves and toward society are major considerations in the acquisition of Standard English skills.

Responses and comments were positive about the development of communications programs which promote academic progress. Many of the participating respondents, 80 percent, were interested in developing such programs. Sixty percent of the institutions had already begun to involve their respective faculties in this effort. Caution, however, must be exercised to prevent these programs from having as their basic philosophy the premise that blacks talk "bad" and their indigenous linguistic system should be eradicated. Given the historical perspective, these black students should learn why some blacks speak the way they do, taking into account their African ancestry and the effect of the American society on their values and life styles.[4] In essence, one cannot separate the study of language from the study of a people's culture. Frantz Fannon, the Martinique born psychologist, noted: "to speak means to be in a position to use a certain syntax, to grasp the morphology of this or that language, but it means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization."[5]

COMMUNICATION SKILLS PROGRAMS

As reported earlier, 60 percent of the respondents indicated a cognizance that many black students need special program assistance to improve communication skills; 60 percent felt that it should be an institutional goal to develop more effective communication skills programs for all students. A review of the 30 programs received from the 77 institutions participating in the study, however, revealed no evidence that the predominantly white institutions directed any particular attention to the special communication patterns of black students. There was also no indication that most of the predominantly black institutions have instructional programs designed to address those communication patterns which are peculiar to blacks. However, since most of the respondents stated that their respective institutions were redesigning freshman English courses to handle this task, it is assumed that the special communication needs of black students in some of those institutions are addressed through the regular entry level English courses. This could not be substantiated, however, from the freshman English program designs reviewed.

Several of the programs submitted have been selected to be presented in this publication. While some of them contain some duplicate features, each has some distinctive elements. In selecting the programs to be presented, attention was given to differences in approaches to program development and instructional methods and techniques.

The programs described range from the comprehensive to the single interest. For example, one program is structured around all of the communication skills--listening, reading, writing and speech; another emphasizes only speech. The descriptions focus on salient features of the programs rather than indepth delineation of every facet.

The first three programs described contain elements which address linguistic patterns peculiar to blacks. For example, two include references to dialects, and one refers to Black English. Since both programs which refer to dialects are in predominantly black institutions, it is reasoned that the references are to black dialects.

Speech Centered Program
(Fort Valley State College)

The communication skills course at Fort Valley State College is housed in the Special Studies program and is characterized as being speech centered. The format of this program allows the students to concentrate on vocabulary building and on the acquisition of skills necessary to understand sentence patterns and sentence structure. Dialect differences are also addressed.

The overall objectives are:

> To aid students in the functional role of basic communication skills and to help them begin to achieve a level of competence;
>
> To help students recognize the influence of area or variant dialects on their oral and written communication and to recognize the differences between standard and non-standard English;
>
> To help students acquire a new level of proficiency in a variety of sentence patterns and to aid them in recognizing the importance of complete sentence responses;

To lead students to the awareness that the sentence should express ideas accurately and effectively (i.e. all of the grammatical and mechanical components needed to effect such);

To help the students enrich their vocabulary for a more effective level of oral and written communication.

In addition to these objectives, there are specific objectives listed under each program component--Vocabulary, Parts of Speech and Sentences. Because of the explicitness of these objectives, it is desirable to list them so that the reader may have the opportunity to conceptualize the program accurately:

Vocabulary

The students will:

demonstrate an expanded vocabulary by incorporating their newly acquired vocabulary in their daily classroom assignments;

demonstrate their skills in phonetic analysis by using the learned approach in decoding words;

bring a dictionary to class daily and use it as an aid in pronunciation, spelling, and word definition;

demonstrate their expertise with context clues by using them to unlock the meaning of unfamiliar words;

demonstrate their knowledge of structural analysis by identifying prefixes, base words, inflectional endings, compound words and syllables as they define, pronounce and spell words.

Parts of Speech

The students will:

define the eight parts of speech;

identify and write grammatical units illustrative of the eight parts of speech;

construct various forms of the same root, using the forms correctly in grammatical units.

Sentences

The students will:

identify and write units of sentences--phrases and clauses;

build and expand "kernel" or "basic" sentences;

identify and construct the different types of sentences according to their clause makeup;

identify and write sentences according to their functions;

master the mechanics and the grammar which are necessary to write strong clear sentences;

revise their work--improving punctuation, spelling, capitalization, grammar and phraseology.

The program is based on activities which are designed to reflect these objectives.

After reviewing the list of activities, it was difficult to determine how the program is "speech-centered." It must be assumed that many of the activities are presented verbally, and, therefore, the program is considered "speech-centered." Another reason for the focus on verbal skills may be explained in one of the objectives which is concerned with the influence of area or variant dialects. To study the affect of dialect on academic progress, it is necessary to discuss the spoken form of communication skills. Since one objective states that the student will gain some facility in recognizing variant dialects in oral and written form, then it must be assumed that this particular objective will emphasize the "oral expression."

The evaluative process for the program includes a diagnostic test of written examinations and a score of 30 on the sentence portion of the College Guidance Placement Test. When the student's progress satisfies this evaluation, he/she will have met the requirements of the program.

A Program with Strong Emphasis on Dialect Differences (Atlanta Junior College)

"Special Studies English" is a program at Atlanta Junior College which strongly emphasizes dialect differences. Attention is also given to Black English in the program's objectives, course outlines and bibliographical data.

Reference is made to Walter Org and his essay, "Voice as Summons for Belief," to substantiate the program's theory of working with "dialect" speakers to help these speakers develop standard communication skills. The program rationale states:

> If Org is correct, then, the student who wishes to be able to produce the phonological features of a different dialect must first learn to hear those features produced--not solely by an external speaker, but most importantly by his own "inner voice." That "inner voice" therefore, must be consciously trained to include the features of the dialect to be learned within its phonological repertory. (An analog: It's one thing to learn to speak 'accented' German, and quite another to learn to speak the Westphalian dialect of German like a Westphalian.)

This statement exemplifies a problem that must be addressed if educators plan to develop sound communication skills programs designed for black students. Many programs are based on the student's ability to imitate standard American speech. This imitation alone is not sufficient to encourage black students to become more "standard" in their communication skills when the situation requires it. Other methods must be devised.

Atlanta Junior College has clearly delineated objectives and methods which should aid student proficiency in standard communication skills. The philosophy of the program implies an underlying assumption that the student's indigenous linguistic system is being considered as objectives and methods are being devised.

Programs which are designed to increase language competency, if they are to be successful, must include methods designed to accommodate a wide variety of social, emotional and educational factors in addition to linguistic factors related to each individual student. With this in mind, each student must be individually evaluated in order to determine the type of instruction that will be most beneficial to him/her.

The goals of the English component of the Special Studies division at Atlanta Junior College are twofold: (1) to provide students with the kinds of writing skills necessary for effective performance not only in college courses but also in daily activities, and (2) to equip them with skills which will enable them to score above the cutoff point on the Exit Writing Sample, a personal narrative, and the Basic Skills Examination, a system-wide error recognition test.

The following are examples of methods used to reach these goals:

Improving Writing Skills

High intensity practice. Provides practice in non-stop and timed writing. Student gains freedom and flexibility in physical aspect of writing. It is valuable in increasing ability to express one's own thoughts.

Journal writing or free writing. Gives student practice in private writing as opposed to public writing. Allows student to develop a

personal voice, an individual style. Increases ability to transfer thoughts to paper. Insures that student does some writing each day. Serves as emotional outlet during academic adjustment.

Letter writing. Student uses code name if he wishes and leaves letter in classroom for instructor who reads and replies. Opens lines of communication between instructor and student in non-threatening manner. Gives student practice in transition from private to semi-public writing.

Brainstorming practice. Provides practice in generating details and examples in group-thinking, then individually. ("Talking out" a paper: oral to written transition.) Especially useful for students with severe writing blockage who have experienced little success with writing in the past and have difficulty getting started.

Tape-recording papers. May be done prior to writing the paper, or after paper has been written. Aids in oral to written transition. Increases awareness of relationship between speech and writing, between voice contours and punctuation. Instructor may also discuss student's paper on tape for the student to listen to in the lab.

Read-and-listen. (Interaction materials) Selections from high-interest, high-information anthologies are recorded on cassette tapes. Student becomes more familiar with structure and intonation of written Standard English. Variety of types of reading material introduced. Reinforcement for reading instruction. Especially valuable for use with students whose native language is not English and in classes where there is a wide disparity in reading skills.

Writing from photo stories and photo booklets. (Interaction materials) High interest, high-motivation for students who have a creative bent (most do!) but are still frightened by expository writing.

Group writing assignments and individual writing assignments in various types of discourse. Selections from Interaction booklets are often used as models, as are student writings.

Script-writing. This exercise is effective as a "turn-on" device for students interested in drama as an introduction to the writing of dialogue. Interaction booklets containing high-interest scripts are used as models.

Translation. (One "dialect" to another "dialect.") This increases students' awareness of dialect differences and students' ability to shift focus in writing. Interaction has selections for use as models. Translation can go in either direction depending on audience and purpose and may be accompanied by role playing.

Sentence combining. This embraces using textbook and/or overhead projectors. Practice in combining kernel ideas in a variety of ways and increasing discrimination in high-context situation as to appropriate and effective use of modifers and conjunctive elements embedding. These exercises result in increased sophistication in sentence and paragraph construction. Exercises in sentence structure and sentence combining are helpful, but transfer of skills from workbooks to the student's own writing must be built in.

Individual and group projects--out of class. (On contract basis) These activities are both school- and community-based and consist of interviews, primary research projects--all involving "basic" writing skills as well as introduction of such additional skills as question-forming, interview planning, appointment-making and appointment-keeping, long-range planning, learning to seek out consultants for a project, learning to utilize a variety of sources of information. Interaction activity cards are sometimes used by students to generate ideas or outline fundamentals for a project. Many students become interested in researching their "roots" and their "branches' as well as their communities.

Films, music, videotapes, newspaper and magazine articles. These are motivational devices and serve as a basis for initiating group discussion.

Editing and Proofreading Skills

A major focus is to increase the students' awareness of "the way something is written in English"--a process of internalization. It includes:

Dictionary usage activities;

Test-taking skills discussion of tests in general and the CGP and SAT specifically--work in test-anxiety-reduction;

Practice in taking "sample" Basic Skills Examinations constructed by the instructors;

Practice in test-building by the students themselves;

Sentence combining practice, using textbook and/or overhead projector;

Recognition of key elements in questions and other sentences;

Sentence combining from student's own writing;

Revision of student's own papers;

Analysis, on an individual basis, of editing aspects with which the student has difficulty and individualized work given on those aspects of grammar;

Group discussion of student papers projected anonymously or shared voluntarily without anonymity;

Individual conferences with instructor, held during class laboratory periods, or by appointment with instructor;

Vocabulary guide, students add one word per day to their vocabulary from the context of their daily environment with record kept;

Personal spelling guide, students receive a copy of a guide to spelling and set up their own spelling workbook based on the instructions and learn to isolate, identify, and correct their own "errors";

Peer tutors, used in varying ways and to varying degrees based on general makeup and flexibility of the class involved;

Writing Center, open day and night for assistance with any aspect of writing from job applications to history term papers.

NOTE: English 101 is directed primarily toward the learning of editing skills; therefore, it is not the primary focus of developmental English.

Academic Survival Skills

This component of the program consists of:

Constant, consistent and positive reinforcement for the student;

Emphasis on the importance of class attendance and punctuality;

Practice in developing group discussion skills;

Practice in developing listening skills;

Practice in following and giving directions;

Practice in test-taking;

Guidance in reading the college catalog;

Learning to deal with authority while in a high-tolerance environment;

Practice in both short-term and long-term assignments to aid in both types of planning;

Practice in adjusting to present capabilities in terms of short-range goals while enlarging upon those capabilities for long-range goals;

Assistance and practice in setting priorities;

Learning to make the transition from external control to internal control;

Support in adjusting to a new, often threatening, environment;

Counseling assistance and referrals.

This program appears to be well planned and student directed. It is based on research which supports the methodology used to reach its stated goals.

A Program Related to Verbal and Written Communication (Clark College)

The program at Clark College concerns itself with Black English as it relates to verbal and written communication. The verbal aspect of the program encourages the use of tape recorders so that the students may learn to monitor their own linguistic habits. The written component emphasizes the need for students to develop the communication competence required to:

distinguish between standard and non-standard dialects;

write expository, argumentative and narrative prose in Standard English, using conventional punctuation and capitalization;

use various research tools and resources, with emphasis on the college library;

write paragraphs and themes, well organized and developed according to determined methods;

discover, understand, and express ideas through writing;

critically and analytically examine one's own thinking and that of others.

Drills, written compositions and the research papers are used to assess the students' proficiency in English composition.

An example of faculty involvement in addressing the communication skills problem on an institution-wide basis can be seen in the English Composition Workshop Plan which Clark College has set forth for its entire faculty.

The objectives of the workshop are to:

arrive at clear, definable standards for evaluating written composition consistently and to achieve consensus on those standards;

introduce and reinforce for raters of English composition a common conceptual background and terminology;

achieve consistent, department-wide use of an established notational system for pointing out composition problems;

develop among faculty members an awareness of the problem of consensus and provide a forum for addressing that need, both now and in future efforts;

foster among faculty members a sense of cooperation and common purpose in teaching and evaluating writing skills;

generate experience and data which can provide the basis for continued in-service institutes to be held at the institution or administered by the institution's personnel.

The workshop procedures are as follows:

1) As a first step, participants will review the list of symbols provided by the college's basic writing reference for the academic year. Because these symbols are to be used to identify problems in composition, some discussion will be necessary to remove ambiguities about the notations and their possible conflict with other systems. Then participants will mark and evaluate a sequence of student compositions and discuss the results at later sessions in repeated attempts to resolve disagreements and variations in marking.

2) Similarly, participants will discuss and clarify standards of minimum writing proficiency expected of the institution's students. These standards will be stated for content and development as well as for mechanics and grammar; the relative importance of the component skills in a student's writing will also be established.

3) To help participants remain aware of their relation to the grading practices of the group, a monitoring and tallying system will be used. Sentence by sentence, the markings on each paper will be tallied and entered on a master sheet, which will then reflect the composite grading actions of all participants. At the beginning of the next session, members will be asked to record on similar sheets the tallies of their individual papers so that each participant will have a basis for comparing individual markings with those of the whole group, and questions can be raised where divergences occur.

4) A further method of cross-checking involves the use of papers which have already been marked. Copies of such papers will be distributed to participants for examination of the errors marked, the symbols used, and the validity of the overall evaluation.

5) Participants will also be encouraged in self-evaluation by the visits of two consultants. The first consultant will explain the state's attempts to achieve uniformity among its raters. Another consultant will explain methods for training readers for the SAT advanced composition test as well as answer questions about the problems to be solved in restoring a composition component to the SAT aptitude test. These interviews will enable participants to explore the extent to which they share the values and attitudes of those agencies with regard to what is essential to good writing and how it can be identified. It should also underscore the need for consensus on such standards.

6) Field trips during one session will allow participants to visit an area campus to study other approaches to the problem of consensus among many graders and to gather ideas for new approaches and techniques for teaching students the essentials of writing. Groups of participants will disperse to a number of campuses to bring back a maximum of experiences and evaluations.

This type of workshop may be instrumental in assisting English instructors to define those characteristics that must be present to evaluate a student's written composition. Furthermore, the importance of establishing college-wide criteria for evaluating students' written work in courses other than English is emphasized.

Teaching Communications Through Disciplines
(Virginia Union University)

At Virginia Union University a special communications program, "Teaching Communications Through the Disciplines", geared to the students' individual needs, was implemented in the fall of 1976. Feeling strongly about such an approach, the institution decided that the program should not be restricted to the literature of the English Department but should be structured to reflect several branches of knowledge--science, social sciences, art and the humanities.

Initiating the program involved several exercises and, at several points, the total faculty. Through a specially designed instrument the faculty was asked for their impressions of students' strengths and weaknesses in communications. A study was made of the students' papers which were on file in the English Department, for a period of three years. The papers represented the writing of sophomores, juniors and seniors. The study helped develop a

profile on the students' communication skills and document the types of communication deficiencies, as reflected in their writing, which were most common among the students. Using these data and McGraw-Hill's pre-testing writing component, an item analysis was made to identify communication needs of incoming freshmen.

Data on student deficiencies in communications were distributed to the faculty. Materials on individualized instruction, module instruction, taxonomies of learning skills and learning theories were also distributed. Trial models were provided for general discussion and criticism. A list of activities designed to get students actively involved and motivated was compiled. Materials were compiled which pertained to the teaching of composition and research and evaluation in English teaching. Using these data and material, several faculty workshops and seminars were held to acquaint the general faculty with the goals of the program. Emphasis was placed on the kinds of language deficits that had been observed or would be encountered, the kinds of barriers--emotional, cultural or otherwise--that required awareness; the range of teaching strategies applicable to levels of proficiency and learning styles, and the kinds of instructional data needed to teach writing.

To clarify student needs, a writing sample from each student was required during the first two weeks of class. Using the data collected, instructional activities were designed to address individual needs and to facilitate conferences and tutoring sessions.

Recognizing the influence that student attitudes exert, the instructors administered an attitudinal and behavioral survey on the students' attitudes toward learning and classroom situations and procedures. This information was useful in the classroom, in conferences and in tutoring sessions.

Teaching-learning units were designed. Among the activities programmed were:

modules for specific segments of student learning;

oral-aural exercises, including audio cassette recordings of prose models and student papers and playback (speaking and listening);

self-editing of papers through playback;

self-evaluation (required);

group discussion and interaction in planning assignments;

role playing and editorial and news commentary, as the first activities in video-taping.

An important feature of the program is the laboratory, which is well equipped with a variety of electronic teaching aids. A major thrust of the students' experiences in the laboratory includes video-taping. In addition to hearing themselves, they can see themselves as they speak and thus gain a better concept of their competence in such verbal areas as pronunciation, significant pauses and rhythms and proper voice pitch. This experience, according to the program leadership, also helps to enhance self-concepts. In the laboratory exercises, the students are assisted by the laboratory supervisor and a member of the English Department who is a professional in oral interpretation as well as in theater.

Students also use cassette tapes and, heard by both the speech and composition instructors, receive a joint evaluation for discussion.

Each instructional activity has a specific objective. Examples are as follows:

Role play--students learn to be observant, creative and to empathize;

Video-taping--students see themselves as other see them, and to develop self-concepts;

Group discussion--students establish a sense of peer equality;

Audio taping and playback, privately and/or in class--students experience some freedom of personal control over performance;

Peer and personal evaluation--students share growth experience through open exchange providing constructive and tactful criticism;

Mini-debates and other interpersonal group action--students are provided the opportunity to sharpen presentation of ideas and to defend a point of view extemporaneously;

Private conferences--students with frustrations are counseled on their ability and their equality.

For the first year of the program 200 students were enrolled; 100 freshmen and 100 sophomores. Performance comparisons were made at intervals between those in the experimental group and those in the usual composition courses. While not unquestionably scientific, the comparisons were highly objective and revealed that the experimental group's performance generally exceeded that of the controlled group. Four hundred students are to be included in the program during the 1977-78 year.

During the first year, the program faculty, assisted by consultants, continually sharpened skills in executing this new instructional approach. The focus of this effort included:

demonstrations in effective techniques allowing students to discover their own weaknesses in mechanics and stylistics;

organization of writing programs;

appropriate attitudes and methods for working with students for whom Standard English is a second language or dialect and the reasons language interference occurs;

individualized instruction module-making and development of instructional behavioral objectives; and

documentary evidence necessary to demonstrate program accountability.

A Basic Skills Program
(Bethune-Cookman College)

The "Basic Skills Program" at Bethune-Cookman College was developed to address its students' communication skills needs. The rationale for this program was based upon the following:

that freshmen students and underachievers need more guidance and supervision to develop self-discipline, a sense of responsibility and other characteristics of good students and citizens;

that the majority of the students who score low on entrance tests have potential to improve their competence levels;

that individualized instruction, which encourages each student to work at his own pace and to become actively involved in his personal development, is important;

that a large attrition rate, often caused by basic skills deficiencies is not only an economical and intellectual waste, but it also decreases drop-out's chance for survival in a competitive society.

With these hypotheses, the program was launched in January, 1977.

One of the basic assumptions of the program was that the participating students have been "educationally disadvantaged," but have potential for achievement. While some students were thought to have special learning problems, it was felt that others had neither been motivated properly nor

had the importance of assuming some responsibility for their educational progress been instilled in them.

To assure that all students at the institution would have the opportunity of being exposed to the program, it was made mandatory for all entering freshmen by including the entry-level college courses as a part of "The Basic Skills Program." In addition, all students who were on academic probation or who had been re-admitted after having been dismissed because of academic deficiencies, were also included as participants.

To assess the needs of program participants, data were drawn from the following:

freshman placement tests;

tests designed by the instructional staff to determine some basic needs of the individual student;

pre-tests before the student begins each unit;

post-tests at mid-semester and at the end of the semester to determine progress;

student interviews.

In addition, standardized tests were administered to each student by the Office of Institutional Research. The following tests were used:

Scholastic Aptitude Test (if scores were missing)

Otis Test of Mental Maturity

California Achievement Test--

- Reading
- Language
- Mathematics

California Psychological Inventory sections--

- Self-Acceptance
- Sense of Well-being

In planning the program, consideration was given to the probability that students would have a wide range of scores on the standardized tests. For those who scored high on the tests, honors courses were devised to stimulate these students and to encourage them to continue to achieve at a high level. On the other hand, for those students who scored average or below on the tests, "The Basic Skills Program" concentrated on helping them to alleviate the deficiencies which might impede their academic progress.

Courses stressing the basic skills are offered. Each course description, objectives and syllabus are developed by faculty persons from the disciplines involved--reading, speech and mathematics. Courses are based on behavioral objectives and emphasize individualized instruction.

Orientation sessions on study skills are a vital component of the program. Topics covered during these sessions are:

How to Study and Take an Examination

Use of the Library

Note-taking, Outlining and Summarizing

How to Prepare a Study Schedule

How to Review and Take an Examination

Listening and Problem-solving Skills

Grades, Review of Cumulative Average

The instructors use tapes, transparencies, hand-outs, etc.

So that the total faculty of the institution is involved in the Basic Skills Program, a faculty workshop each semester concentrates on competency in basic skills, and teachers are required to emphasize competency in basic communication skills by directing particular attention to such activities as:

instruction on how to study, prepare for tests and take notes for each class;

teaching reading in content area;

observation of the student's inability to do a research paper, use good grammar and give oral reports;

referrals to the Learning Resource Center, the Director of the Basic Skills Program or the counselor.

Students are monitored and evaluated in their classroom situations through teacher-made tests and through the re-administering of standardized tests. Counseling and tutoring are available as needed. Periodic checks on the students through various evaluation techniques and conferences have been set up.

The content of the communication skills courses is designed to expose students to the skills that are necessary if they are to be successful in pursuing their educational goals. For example, the English course is structured to help students build a vocabulary base through which they can become more proficient in all phases of language usage. These basics may be acquired through class meetings, individual conferences, the Communications Skills Laboratory or the Learning Resource Center. This program is designed to have carry-over between the reading and writing components and, hopefully, to have carry-over into more advanced courses.

Through the program, students are exposed to a basic skills program with well-developed student performance objectives and internal and external evaluative procedures.

A Program of Advanced Strategies in Communication
(Huston-Tillotson College)

"Advanced Strategies in Communication" is a program designed to bridge the gap between the student's acquired communication skills and other essential skills necessary for optimum experiences at the college level. Huston-Tillotson's program stresses reading as the vehicle through which it attempts to address the basic communication skills of its students. The major goal of the program is to expose students to reading in hope that they will acquire the "reading habit."

Through this program, efforts are made to enable students to:

> employ varying competencies and strategies to master the supporting skills and emotions involved in reading improvement (positive attitude, good concentration, listening, following directions, self-image, etc.);
>
> employ varying strategies and skills to master the pronunciation and meanings of words involved in reading at the college level;
>
> use generalizations of regular spelling patterns, variant spelling patterns, and phonic knowledge where applicable in spelling performances;
>
> implement organization, flexibility, selectivity, and generalization skills in order to enhance their competence in comprehending printed and spoken knowledge;
>
> make use of standard writing and speaking practices;
>
> employ adequate study and test-taking techniques.

With these skills, the student is expected to apply the knowledge gained to other academic studies.

Six learning modes or methods are utilized in the program:

> Discovery (inquiry) Method: The student is led into a discovery of concepts and principles through guided

experiences which require deductive and inductive thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving strategies. Discussion, written and graphic experiences are developed through the employment of varying media and techniques. The instructor facilitates, reinforces, and coordinates; the student explores his potential.

Laboratory: The student works in the laboratory on a voluntary and/or assigned basis. Equipment and materials are provided for classroom follow-up activities and/or self-help purposes.

Independent Study: The student is encouraged to work in the laboratory to gain strength in the area of interest. Modules are available in all areas and can be completed independently. Upon completion of a module, the student evaluates performance, thus gaining immediate feed-back and evidence of progress.

Individualized Instruction: Experiences are provided so that each student has the autonomy to pursue the strategies and areas of his/her concerns in keeping with his/her interests and level of development. The focus is on experiencing success through a student-centered, self-paced approach.

Tutoring: The student-tutor and/or teacher-tutor approach is employed to help students acquire those skills and efficiencies necessary for success in the content areas. One-to-one and/or small group sessions are needed.

Lecture (Class Discussion Included): This method is student-centered as much as possible and is utilized only when it is appropriate.

The instructor determines which method is appropriate for the situation. The lecture method is the only method which is not used unless absolutely necessary. The program emphasizes "doing"; "lecturing" to students is not desirable unless the instructor believes it to be appropriate.

Some of the activities which are utilized in the program are presented in the following sequence:

Week One	Orientation Inventory of Study Habits Listening Skills
Week Two	Self-Awareness Increasing Comprehension Skills
Week Three	How to Study Phonics Review
Week Four	Syllabication
Weeks Five and Six	Prefixes, Roots and Suffixes
Week Seven through Week Sixteen	Context Clues, Paragraph and Organization Patterns, Main Idea Vocabulary Tests, Recalling Facts, Book Reports, Spelling Review, Note-taking, Writing Patterns Testing of Skills

Before the students have been exposed to the activities, they are administered a standardized pre-test to determine the initial level of proficiency. From reading the description of the program, it is assumed that it is called an "advanced" program because it is not administered to freshmen. Therefore, students who are enrolled in this program are taking other college courses. Consequently, their performance in this program and their performance in their other courses should affect one another. In fact, according to the program philosophy, "It is perceived that as the student masters the competencies in this course, his test performance as well as performances in academic studies will improve." To evaluate the validity of this belief, a post-test is administered at the end of the program.

Multimedia Laboratory Program
(San Antonio College)

The Multimedia Laboratory at San Antonio College is a highly technological laboratory designed to aid students with their communication skills.

Different course structures are set up in the laboratory, and English is one of them.

Students are required to spend one-third of their English course time in the Multimedia Laboratory, two hours in the classroom and one hour per week in the laboratory. The laboratory is self-paced and the student is exposed to individualized and personalized instruction. He/she has the option of using the equipment at any time.

The laboratory uses the re-cycling technique for individualized instruction, i.e., students are re-cycled over the same material approximately ten times until they learn to use the material at their own speed and until the basic concepts of English have been mastered and can be incorporated into their writing.

The programmed material is described as follows:

> Carrels: Each carrel is equipped with a 35mm slide projector and cassette player. The 250 slides are coded by color and graphic idea furnishing clues for rapid identification of sentence elements. (The slides can also be utilized in a traditional classroom setting to teach sentence patterns.) A mini-course (containing only 65 slides) is used for review or self-tutoring.
>
> Instructor/student-programmed material: A programmed manual of five units may be used in conjunction with slides and tapes or can be studied independently. The first three units analyze sentence patterns; the latter two units cover Freshman Composition rhetorical skills.
>
> Computer assisted instruction (CAI): The material covered in computer assisted instruction is based on the same outline as the five units on the slides and tapes, the programmed manual, and the test file. All units are written for entry level of remedial students. The equipment provides for instruction to students in successful completion of a module or, when an answer is incorrect, refers to access to explanation of the material missed.

The Freshman Composition course is a computer-based English project sponsored by the University of Texas, Austin. San Antonio College has transferred this program to its computer center. The materials are divided into seven modules, each of which may be used in any sequence. Although "these modules are written for non-remedial students," the students in the Multimedia Laboratory are successfully completing the program after completion of the five learning units in the Laboratory.

Future plans call for expanding the facilities in the laboratory, developing new CAI materials, transferring of CAI materials, establishing a bibliographic index and a clearing house index for all CAI programs in English Composition, and introducing effective programs to college students to develop English skills.

The laboratory offers a tutoring and proctoring service to all students making use of the facilities. The tutors and proctors administer exercises, grade them and give the students the necessary feedback. In addition, students may have the opportunity of receiving one-to-one tutoring sessions. At the students' disposal is a Learning-Laboratory-Learning-Line--a telephone tutoring service with a direct telephone line to the Multimedia Laboratory. This telephone line helps all students who need assistance with material being covered in the English classes.

Communication Skills Laboratory Program
(Delgado Junior College)

The "Communications Skills Laboratory" is Delgado Junior College's medium for working with the basic communication skills of its students. The laboratory is divided into writing and reading components; attendance is voluntary.

Before continuing discussion on the laboratory, it is important to discuss the basic philosophy upon which it is established. The philosophy statement asserts that--

> many, if not all, of the students attending a junior college with an open-door policy should have available to them exceptional instruction.

The authors of this statement use the term "exceptional" to mean, "instruction that cannot be obtained in a classroom where one teacher addresses thirty or more students." It further describes "exceptional" instruction as instruction that is necessary for students who come from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. In addition, it describes a teaching mode that makes readily available individualized instruction when the student feels the need for reinforcement.

Students may attend the laboratory after having been referred by an instructor or on their own initiative. Students are monitored and assessed on a regular basis by laboratory personnel. All attempts are made to work with the student's specific problems. If for some reason the student is not helped in the laboratory, suggestions are made as to where assistance may be obtained.

In the writing component of the Communication Skills Laboratory, audio-visual equipment and materials are used, such as the language masters and taped television programs covering problem areas of English grammar. Understanding language is considered an important skill in the writing component.

In the reading component, standardized tests, such as SRA Reading Record, the Nelson-Denny and the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal Test, are administered to some students in the laboratory. After the tests have been analyzed, activities are selected according to the students' individualized needs. In some cases students contract with the instructor for a grade and must do a specific amount of work at a predetermined level to receive the grade for which they contracted.

A Writing Based Program
(Tennessee State University)

Tennessee State University approaches the improvement of basic communication skills through a writing clinic. This clinic serves as a center in which students having completed the institution's required freshman English courses may receive help with their written communication problems, and also serves freshmen who have severe communication problems. In the case of freshmen, complete cooperation between the course instructor and the clinic instructor is demanded.

Research by the clinic instructor has disclosed that there are basically five types of students who come to the clinic.

Students who have problems with composition--finding and managing ideas or facts, handling invention and arrangement;

Students who seek help with revision;

Students who lack basic skills--sentence sense and understanding the mechanics of expression;

Students who are overly creative and have little or no trouble with mechanics, but who write impulsively;

Students who seek to improve already superior writing.

Once the level of need has been determined, the instructor decides what types of activities are essential to help the student with his problem. To assist the instructor, the clinic is equipped with handbooks, programmed texts, filmstrips and recorders, to name a few. Each student is given individualized instruction, and complete records are kept on the student's work and level of progress.

The descriptions presented did not include every facet of the programs to which they refer. Rather, the major features were depicted. The descriptions, nevertheless, denote that the programs are based on methodology designed to instruct students and that a wide variety of approaches are used to teach standard communications skills. However, most of the programs did not include explicit methodology for aiding black students to transform their Black English system to Standard English. It is rationalized that this may be due to the fact that, historically, research on linguistic patterns of blacks has been geared to theory and philosophy rather than instructional methods and techniques.

DESIGNING LINGUISTIC PROGRAMS FOR MINORITY STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The discussion which follows is not based on data derived from the survey. It is a discussion which the investigator elected to include because it impinges upon the subject of this volume and may be helpful to those who are responsible for developing and/or administering programs designed to improve the standard linguistic skills of minorities.

Modifying the language of a group of people often brings about a disquieting, if not rebellious reaction. Therefore, the basis for modifying a people's language should be objectively established and well understood by all concerned. While a variety of approaches may be employed, the views of Walt Wolfram,[6] a Washington, D.C. linguist, are offered for consideration. Wolfram has delineated his models as follows:

(1) A deficit model which treats difference in terms of a norm and deviation from the norm--the norm being middle-class white behavior.

(2) A difference model which seems to be much more common to anthropology, sociology and psychology considers socially subordinate societies and language varieties as self-contained systems inherently neither deficient nor superior.

The basic difference between these two models is one not only of terminology but also of attitude. Many psychologists and educators approach the

study of black culture from the pathology perspective; and, in doing so, it is assumed that blacks have difficulty in their educational endeavors because they are intellectually deficient.[7] If an educator's theory is based on the deficiency model and is carried over to the study of the linguistic system of blacks, then his/her attitude toward those persons and their language will be one of pathology.[8] On the other hand, if an educator views the black's linguistic system as being "different" but not "deficient," his attitude toward that person and his treatment of that person's linguistic system will be more positive.

Although in the past, there has been a tendency on the part of the media to represent blacks in a restrictive manner and, in part, the visual presentation bore little relationship to the actuality of living as a black for many people, advances have been made. Hopefully, these beginnings will culminate in a better presentation of the black role in American society so that students will have something with which to identify. To further complicate media's former presentation of blacks, the black linguistic system is often openly criticized by some teachers, including blacks. These teachers have been taught or have come to believe that blacks speak "bad," and because of this orientation they instill a serious feeling of inferiority in their students.

One cannot be too sensitive to the importance of understanding the "difference" model when designing communication skills programs for minorities because the language of an individual is a personal attribute and represents the culture of the individual. To exert critical or negative attitudes in any form toward an individual's language is tantamount to rejecting that

individual's culture, his values, his parents and all other things that are of importance to him from a community perspective.

Many black students who are lacking in communication skills in Standard English grow up knowing that "they don't speak so good." To surmount this limitation, they need teachers with positive rather than negative attitudes about their communication patterns. Therefore, it may be just as appropriate to implement programs which deal with the attitudes of educators toward cultural differences as it is to set up programs to help students overcome their communication deficiencies. In fact, this may be the first step necessary to help young blacks develop positive self-images which may, in turn, make them more receptive to acquiring proficiency in the use of those educational "tools" that will help them to develop the skills and competencies necessary to function effectively in this society.

To put the aforementioned statement in perspective, we must discuss the theory of communication competence. Some present-day linguists assume that all languages or dialects function as communication systems and that all language systems that prove sufficient for the group serve as a means of communication. Yet, since our educational system has adopted a standard around which all of its theory and teachings have been developed, it is necessary for the segments of society to have a working knowledge of this standard. The acceptance of the standard, however, should not negate the "choice" of retaining one's cultural identity. As a means of doing this, the concept of "switching" has been introduced.[9] A person may use the "standard" or "formal" mode of communication when in school, business, or formal situations; but the same

individual may "switch" and use the behavioral (linguistic system) characteristics of his cultural group when he is relaxing or in a more informal communication setting. This concept has been used as rationale for a few language programs. If it is presented in a positive mode, it may be helpful in working with blacks to improve their standard mode of communication.

When sensitizing and educating students to language differences, it is not enough to tell black students that they speak Black English and that they must speak Standard English if economic access is desired. Most of these students realize that because of racial attitudes, speaking Standard English does not necessarily afford them the opportunity to compete. A possibility must be stressed that, with becoming standard, there is one less barrier to entrance into the mainstream of this society. For example, a job interviewer will not be able to use English as an excuse for not considering a black person for a job.

After the students have been exposed to the importance of culture, they should then be given an opportunity to study the African origins of their communication patterns. (See Appendix D for references.) It must be noted that students can be in the process of developing skills as they are learning this background information. They should be involved in literature research, debates, and notetaking. As part of the historical perspective, the student should read books from a carefully prepared bibliography in order to make reports on the different theories concerning Black English.

A list of Black English features should be given to the students, they should be provided examples of how Black English parallels, in many instances, Standard English. Unique Black English features should also be discussed,

with students spending as much time as necessary working with these features. Exercises should be devised whereby students will have to translate Black English to Standard English and vice versa. This must be done in spoken form and written form. The instructor should begin by comparing and contrasting phonological features (sounds). She/he should then move to morphological features (words), lexicon (vocabulary), and syntax (sentence structure). The students should be able eventually to convert Black English to Standard English and should be able to look at some of their old papers and identify errors in Standard English usage.

It is of utmost importance that the students understand Black English features and how they relate to Standard English. They must learn to listen to themselves and how they speak (the reference to Org substantiates the necessity of this skill); therefore, tape recorded examples of their speech must be made. In short, students must know the difference between Black English and Standard English features, be able to identify Black English features in their communication habits, and be able to use Standard English in lieu of Black English in more formal communication settings (education, business, etc.).

The basis for this programmatic idea is to help students understand the legitimacy of their linguistic system while at the same time equipping them with the skills in Standard English which are essential to academic and societal success.

As noted earlier, most of the available literature on Black English addresses the linguistic theory surrounding its usage. Many studies have been published which identify the linguistic patterns of blacks who reside in various regions of this country. However, there appears to be very little

published research describing actual and successful classroom methodologies which modify the linguistic behavior of black students, especially dialects, so that they may approach standard linguistic usage.

Methodological research must be undertaken and published to assist those instructors who are working in communication skills programs. Until this is done, most of the literature which is available on the subject of Black English will be of little practical consequence to the classroom instructor who must work with black students on a daily basis.

SUMMARY

The focus of this study was two-pronged. First, it sought to identify and analyze selected communication patterns which affect academic progress of black postsecondary students in the Southern region. Secondly, the study describes some instructional programs used by institutions to assist those students in communication skills improvement, namely Standard English.

Information essential to the execution of the first task was gained through the questionnaire method of inquiry. For the second task, facts were derived by soliciting copies of special communications skills programs in progress at surveyed institutions.

All respondents recognized the distinct features of the black linguistic system, and the majority felt that it interferes with the black student's development of Standard English communication skills and subsequent academic progress. Fewer than half contended it did not pose any difficulty for black students in mastering Standard English communication skills.

Although Black English was recognized as a structured system of language, it is still just a "dialect," most study participants felt, and should be treated as one. Many Black English characteristics which are present in the black student's written work are not necessarily related to the spoken black linguistic system, respondents emphasized. Instead, they are errors which may be found in the written composition of anyone learning to write Standard English composition.

Students are aware of their deviation from Standard English, believed 40 percent of the respondents.

To help their students, the majority of faculty surveyed would stress all communications skills (listening, reading, writing and speech) and use all available instructional methods (laboratory programmed exercises, written drills, etc.).

A clear conception of the problems that may confront black students unskilled in Standard English and the impact this deficiency may exert upon student academic success was recognized by nearly all respondents.

It is necessary to develop a program to improve communication skills of many black students most of the polled affirmed, and the majority reported already working with the entire faculty toward such an institutional goal. However, a review of some of those institutions' programs did not reveal the existence of such programs in predominantly white institutions nor in most of the predominantly black institutions. It appeared that instruction in communications in these institutions is executed primarily through the regular entry level English courses.

While some of the participating institutions did provide evidence of special communications programs, only three contained features that were specifically addressed to communication patterns peculiar to blacks. The programs ranged, in structure, from the very comprehensive to the single interest. For instance, one program design incorporated features of all the communication skills--listening, reading, writing and speech. Another was characterized as being speech centered, only.

Recognizing that attempts to modify the language of a group of people often generate adverse reactions, the investigator outlined and expanded two models developed by linguist Walt Wolfram[6] which may be helpful to those developing communications skills programs for minorities.

This study indicates that, by far, most research on Black English is related to linguistic theory rather than instructional methodology and techniques. It is proffered that an urgent need exists for methodological research which could be used by classroom teachers working with black students whose linguistic patterns may handicap their academic progress.

NOTES

[1] Walt Wolfram, Sociolinguistic Premises and the Nature of Non-standard Dialects. Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1970.

[2] W. Stewart, "Toward a History of American Negro Dialect," Language and Poverty: Perspectives on a Theme. Chicago: Markham, 1970.

[3] Kenneth R. Johnson, Teaching the Culturally Disadvantaged. Palo Alto, California: Science Research Associates, Inc., p. 144.

[4] W. Stewart, "Toward a History of American Negro Dialect," Language and Poverty: Perspectives on a Theme. Chicago: Markham, 1970.

[5] Frantz Fanon, Black Skin, White Masks. New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1968.

[6] Walt Wolfram, Sociolinguistic Premises and the Nature of Non-standard Dialects. Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1970.

[7] A. R. Jensen, "How can we Boost IQ and Scholastic Achievement?" Harvard Educational Review. 1969, pp. 1-123.

[8] The investigator inadvertently used the term "deficient" in item number six (6) of the questionnaire. This usage of the term does not reflect her attitude toward language differences.

[9] Harry Osser, "Developmental Studies of Communicative Competence," Sociolinguistics. Washington, D.C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1970.

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONS INCLUDED IN THE ANALYSIS OF THE DATA*

ALABAMA

Alabama A&M University
Alabama State University
Jefferson State Junior College
Miles College
Snead State Junior College

ARKANSAS

University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff

FLORIDA

Bethune-Cookman College
Broward Community College
Florida Junior College
Gulf Coast Community College
Polk Community College
St. Petersburg Junior College

GEORGIA

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College
Atlanta Junior College
Clark College
Fort Valley State College
Paine College
Savannah State College
South Georgia College

*Other institutions responded too late to be included.

LOUISIANA

Delgado Junior College
Grambling State University
Our Lady of Holy Cross College
Southern University, Baton Rouge
Southern University, New Orleans
Southern University, Shreveport
Xavier University

MARYLAND

Charles County Community College
Community College of Baltimore
Coppin State College
Harford Community College
Montgomery College
Prince George's Community College

MISSISSIPPI

Alcorn State University
Coahoma Junior College
Jackson State University
Meridian Junior College
Mississippi Industrial College
Tougaloo College
Rust College
Utica Junior College

NORTH CAROLINA

Barber-Scotia College
Central Piedmont Community College
Fayetteville State University
Fayetteville Technical Institute
Johnson C. Smith University
Livingstone College
North Carolina Central University
Rockingham Community College
Shaw University
St. Augustine's College

Western Piedmont Community College
Wilkes Community College
Winston-Salem State University

SOUTH CAROLINA

Allen University
Benedict College
Claflin College
Friendship Junior College
South Carolina State College
Voorhees College

TENNESSEE

Knoxville College
LeMoyne-Owen College
Morristown College
Tennessee State University

TEXAS

Bishop College
College of the Mainland
Del Mar College
Houston Community College
Huston-Tillotson College
Kilgore College
Paul Quinn College
Prairie View A&M University
Ranger Junior College
Tarrant County Junior College
Texas Southern University

VIRGINIA

Norfolk State College
Virginia Union University

WEST VIRGINIA

West Virginia State College

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE

COMMUNICATION SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

INSTITUTION: _____ DATE: _____

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to identify the patterns of communication skills of minority students in the region, at the postsecondary entry level, which affect academic achievement and to describe instructional activities which institutions are using to address these patterns. It is perceived that the pursuance of this study will provide valuable information for institutions which are seeking to meet the needs of minority students who are deficient in their communication skills.

The biographic information requested will be very important in preparing the background narrative of the report. No institution nor individual, however, will be identified, as these data will be treated in mass.

If the space provided for narrative responses is not adequate, please add the necessary sheets to provide a full reply. If such is done, each sheet should be headed by the number of the question to which the information refers.

We welcome attachments which describe programs and illustrate instructional materials.

Responses should be forwarded to:

Dr. W. C. Brown, Director
Institute for Higher
Educational Opportunity
Southern Regional Education Board
130 Sixth Street, N.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30313

1. Do you believe that the linguistic system of blacks interferes with their ability to develop standard English communication skills?

   Yes____ No____ Explain.

2. Do you recognize "Black English" as a structured system of language?

   Yes____ No____ Explain.

3. Have you noticed the following linguistic patterns in the speech of your students?

   a. Substitution of "f" for "th" e.g. (wif/with, birfday/birthday)

      Yes____ No____

   b. Omission of final member of consonant clusters at the end of words e.g. (tes_/test, wil_/wild, col_/cold)

      Yes____ No____

   c. Copula absence
      e.g. (He busy/He is busy, He not in now/He is not in now)

      Yes____ No____

   d. Double or triple negatives
      e.g. (He didn't do nothing to nobody)

      Yes____ No____

   e. Absence of third person singular
      e.g. (He act_like a big dude/He acts like a big dude)

      Yes____ No____

   f. Habitual "be" used as substitute for is, am and are.
      e.g. (I be tired/I am tired all of the time)

      Yes____ No____

4. Does the written communication of your students include some of the above linguistic characteristics?

   Yes____ No____

   a. (Circle the characteristics that you have found present: a, b, c, d, e, f.)

   b. List other characteristics not enumerated in the above question.

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

5. Are your students aware of how their communication habits deviate from standard English usage?

   Yes____ No____

   If yes, how were they made aware?

6. To what do you attribute the students' deficiencies in communication skills?

7. If you were to develop a program to improve a student's communication skills, on what skill or skills (listening, speaking, writing, reading) would you place the instructional emphasis?

8. What methods would you use (laboratory programmed exercises, written drills, spoken drills, etc.) to improve the students' communication skills?

9. Has your institution determined the necessity of developing a program designed to decrease the students' problems in communication skills development?

Yes____ No____

If yes, attach copy of program.

10. Is your institution working with the entire faculty to make them aware of the importance of having, as an institutional goal, a program to help develop more effective communication skills for <u>all</u> students?

Yes____ No____

If yes, briefly describe what is bein gdone.

11. Please include any additional information or comments that will enhance the effectiveness of this study.

BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

INSTRUCTIONS: This information is to be provided by the individual primarily responsible for completing the Questionnaire.

A. General:

1. Name _____

2. Address _____

_____

3. Institution _____

4. Position and Title _____

5. Department _____

6. Length of Service at Institution _____

B. Educational Data:

1. Undergraduate Institution _____

_____

a. Major _____

b. Year of Graduation _____

c. Degree (B.A. or B.S.) _____

2. Master's Degree (Specify) _____

a. Institution _____

b. Major _____

c. Year of Graduation _____

d. Topic of Thesis _____

_____

3. Doctorate (Specify) _____

a. Institution _____

b. Major _____

c. Year of Graduation _____

d. Dissertation Topic _____

_____

4. Research Interests Related to Communications_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

C. Information About Institution:

1. Racial Composition of Students (In percentages)

Black _____

Caucasian _____

All Others_____

2. Racial Composition of Faculty (In percentages)

Black _____

Caucasian _____

All Others_____

3. Which department(s) addresses itself to the communication skills area?

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX C

BLACK ENGLISH FEATURES

I. Phonological Characteristics

A. Consonant cluster reduction - Final position

1. tes/test buil/build
   des/desk han/hand

2. Also true when ed added to a word-

   rub/rubbed mess/messed
   rain/rained

3. true when both consonants are voiced or voiceless--not true when one consonant is voiced and the other is voiceless.

   jump rent
   count belt

B. th sound

   d/th voiced dem, den (then)
   f/th voiceless souf, mouf

will be initial, medial or final position.

Some variations--

t/th sout'/for south
v/th bruvah/brother
ravah/rather
bavin/bathing

C. r and l

deletion of middle and final l and r

1. especially after a vowel - steal - steauh
   sister- sistuh

2. preceding a consonant - absence of l and r

3. after initial consonant, r may be absent

   protect - p'otect
   p'fessor

   absence of l and r are not as socially stigmatized as other non-standard pronunciation rules because the absences are also standard for some Northern dialects and New England dialect.

D. Final b/d/g devoicing - becomes p/t/k

   doesn't mean that pig = pick
   bud = butt
   cap = cab

Vowel differences distinguish the words. Length of vowel is different. Vowel is longer when preceded by a voiced sound.

E. Vowels

   i + ng = ang
   thing, thang; ring, rang

vowels are southernized

F. Primary stress on first syllable:

police po'lice Detroit Dee-troit

G. Going to/gonna = gon

He was gon tell his momma goodbye

Exercise:

tooth	self	tore
sore	insurance	sing
desks	king	going to do
this	rest	with

(Translate into Black English)

II. Syntactic and Semantic Characteristics

A. Copula - Use of the to be verb is variable, depending on context and usage
Are regularities in usage- is rule governed

B. Present (occurs)

1. Habitual be

To denote a habitual ongoing event.
There is no direct Standard English translation.

Every day I be tired at 6:00.
She always be too slow for me.

Used by lower class blacks, rare in middle class black speech

2. Is was - for past tense and questions:

He was my English teacher last year.
You ain't sick, is you? Is he sick?

3. For emphasis

Allah is God.
He is a expert.

4. End of a clause

He is!

5. In a comparative.

It always somebody tougher than you are.

C. Omission

Frequently absent in Black English
Rule of Labov:

Wherever Standard English can contract, Black English can delete is and are

Wherever Standard English cannot contract, Black English cannot delete is and are

She gonna go.
He fast.
We on tape.

Morphemes

word endings ed. s. of 3rd person singular, possessive plural

Omission

Morphemes are generally signalled by context and word order and not by word ending

I saw two boy.

absence of possessive - the boy hat - 2 nouns
signal possessive - so no morpheme

Plural

May be omitted in Black English

He took five book
The other teacher-, they'll yell at you.

May be present but in altered form because of consonant reduction

desk-dess-desses
test-tess-tesses
ghost-ghoss-ghosses

Irregular plurals are sometimes regularized:

deer - deers
foot - feets
men - mens
child - childrens
people- peoples

3rd person singular

Frequent omission

-He go every day.
-The man want to go.
-The girl eat beans.

also with have and do

He do. He have a bike.

ed form

May be omitted due to consonant reduction rule-

miss/missed name/named
finish/finished crack/cracked
cash/cashed

When morphemes are present - Hypercorrection

traditional definition - attempt to use Standard English but uses Standard English forms incorrectly

examples: I gots, they likes, he bees here

inaccurate application of Standard English rules an overgeneralization

another opinion--deliberate misuse of Standard English rules for emphasis (Orlando Taylor).

Perfective

definition - have + V + ed in Standard English
en
nothing

Presence

1. Done + past
   I done tried it.
   The bullet done hit me.
   also southern white nonstandard speech

2. Done + been
   I been done fix them things. (Emphasis)
   They done been sitting here. (Emphasis)

3. Been + have--remote time construction
   I been had it there for three years
   You won't get your dues that you done been paid

Omission

1. Have can be deleted--also a trend in colloquial speech

He gone home already.

Future

1. Standard English - use of will, mostly contracted
   Black English - contracted or omitted:

He miss you tomorrow.

2. To be going to - expresses future informally

Black English:	gonna go	He gon go
	goin'ta go	I'man go
	I'mana go	I'ma go
	I'ma go	

Gonna = most frequent production

Negation

1. Ain't for have/has and am/are/is

I ain't gonna do it. He ain't done it.

2. Multiple Negation

Couldn't nobody do it
Nobody didn't do it
Nobody has no matches
You can't drink nothing strong
I don't want nothing
Don't nobody break up a fight
He don't (no does) want to

There are systematic rules for negative usage (See Burling.)

Questions

Standard and Black English don't differ in simple question formation but differ in complex question formation

Is John going?
What was the boy eating?

Same Standard and Black English.

Some differences

1. Omission of do Why (do) they listen to me?
2. Inversion of subject and verb are not obligatory--

Why you don't like him?
I don't need no grease?
Why you didn't go to school?

More complex questions - embedded questions:

Standard English: Ask him if you can do it?
Black English: Ask him can you do it.
I wonder is he going.
He should decide is he able.

When if and whether should be used in Standard English, Black English omits the forms and inverts word order.

In other embedded questions, there is some variation of word order.

(Standard English inverts, Black English doesn't always! I don't know how did I do it. I wonder is he going.)

Do and Be for questions and emphasis.

What do they be doing every day?

Pronouns

1. there is/it is
there's/it's
there was/it was

There's a school up there/its a school up there.

2. Double subject: pronominal apposition:

My brother, he bigger than you.

That teacher, she yell at the kids all the time.

Not only Black English, used for emphasis

3. They used for possessive and reflexive meanings:

The man bought they house.

Articles

a used instead of an

a apple, a egg

Subject verb agreement

Not always concord:	They was here.	You was there.
	He don't go.	I bees here.

Presented by Dr. Lynn Bliss, Assistant Professor, Speech and Hearing Center, Wayne State University, at the January 28-30, 1977, workshop on Black Dialect. Sponsored by Xavier University and the Institute for Teaching and Learning.

APPENDIX D

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BLACK ENGLISH MATERIALS

This bibliography may be used as a supplementary reading list for instructors or students who are interested in language differences.

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